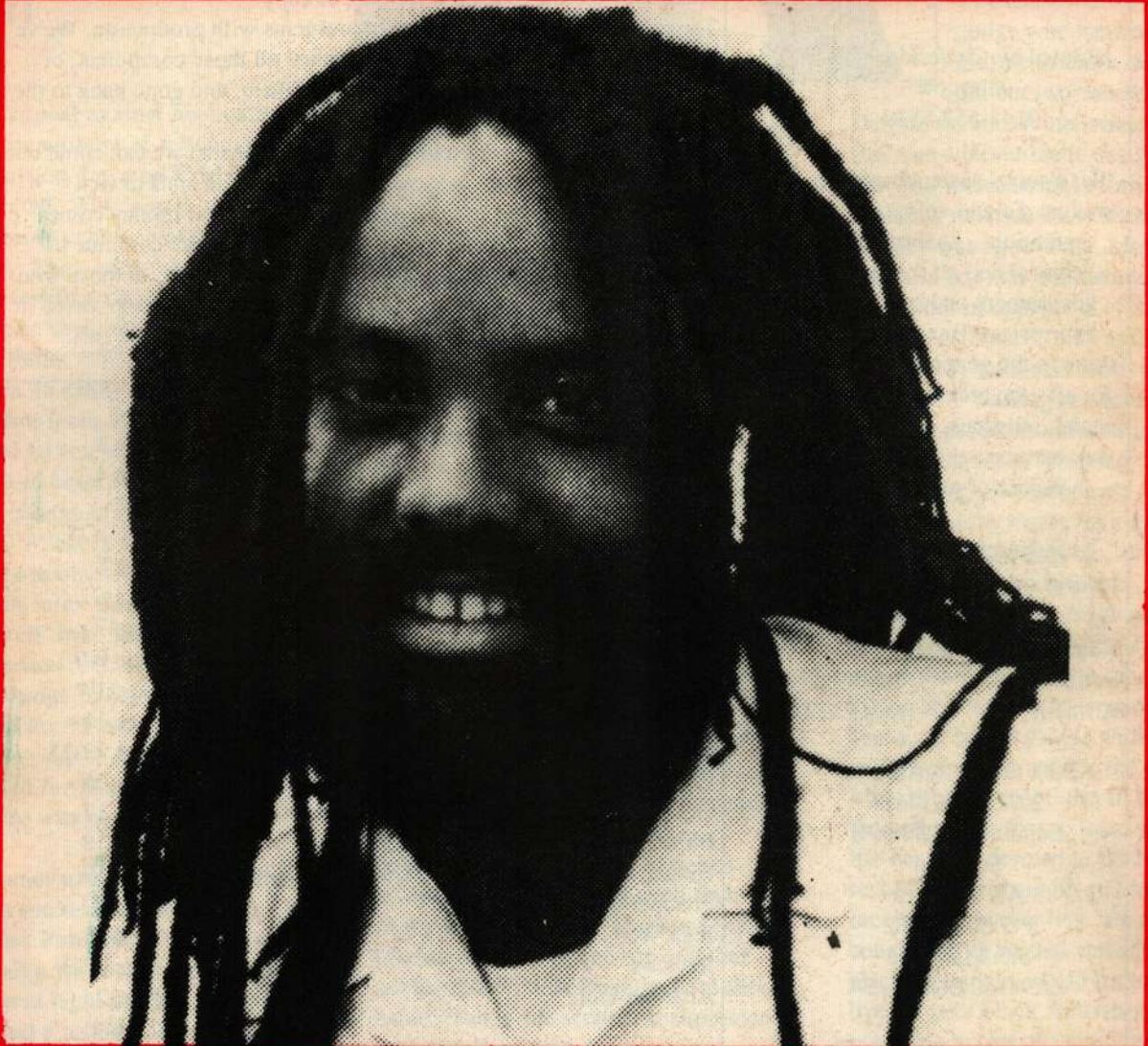


BLACK FLAG

Estab. 1970 - "Excitingly Irregular"

Issue No. 206 - £1

FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL!



In this issue:

Interview with Lorenzo Kom'boa
Ervin. Pornography. Prison News.
Book Reviews. And much more!

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control and all forms of
government and economic
repression. To establish a
share in the general prosperity
for all - the breaking down of
racial, religious, national and
sex barriers -and to fight for
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Editorial

It's been nearly a year since our last issue. Thanks for your patience and for all the good wishes and offers of help we had during that period. As some of you will know, our problem wasn't (for once) lack of money, as our printers generously extend us credit. Nor was it that old enemy of anarchist papers - lack of copy.

The delay has been entirely due to problems with production. We've now adopted a luddite approach, smashed all those computers, or "*devil machines*" as some comrades call them, and gone back to the pasting board.

On a serious level, we're a bit smaller but hope that we can come out quarterly in this format. As ever, we have no paid staff or rich backers, just what we can do in our spare time. Our money comes from our own pockets and from your generosity. We continue to send Black Flag free to prisoners and at a reduced rate to those who can't afford it. We also send it to anarchists and people interested in anarchism in the poor world. Your support helps us to do this.

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE - 1st DECEMBER 1995

Mumia Abu - Jamal Appeal turned down



Mumia's appeal against his death sentence for murder of a Pennsylvania cop was turned down on Friday 15th September 95. This was in the face of overwhelming evidence of Mumia's innocence. Four unconnected witnesses testified they had seen someone else shoot the cop and flee the area; the bullet retrieved from the body was a 44 calibre bullet, incapable of being shot from Mumia's 38 calibre gun (found on the scene); police evidence had been destroyed; the officer in charge of Mumia that night in hospital wrote in his report: "the male negro made no statements" but two months later 'suddenly remembered' that Mumia had made a full confession! etc. etc.

However Judge Sabo, erstwhile member of the "Fraternal Order of Police" (a group that have relentlessly campaigned for Mumia's execution), stated there was no evidence to answer.

Legal avenues are all but exhausted, however a spokeswoman for the Friends and Families of Mumia said the campaign was being stepped up: "Slavery was legal but it wasn't right; Hitler killed 6 million Jews perfectly legally it was not right; businesses pollute our water and our air it is still not right; legal or otherwise we are not going to allow this to happen."

Mumia Abu-Jamal has been an activist and subject to FBI surveillance since the age of fourteen when he was arrested for taking part in a protest against the racist pro-segregation Governor of Alabama. The next year he joined the Black Panther Party and was appointed its

information officer in Philadelphia. In the 1970s he began to work as a journalist, continually exposing racist practices in the Mayor's office and police brutality against black people. He was consequently a distinctly unpopular person with the state powers in Philadelphia, particularly the police. In more recent years he became a supporter of MOVE a militant black group which advocates ecological revolution. MOVE have been the target of beatings, sieges, imprisonment and even a bomb attack in 1985 in which 11 people including children were murdered by the Philadelphia police and 250 people left homeless by the blaze; the explosives were supplied by the FBI.

On December 9th 1981 Mumia, working as a taxi driver, spotted his brother being beaten by a policeman in downtown Philadelphia. He left his cab to intervene and was shot in the stomach; another shot was fired and the policeman was killed. Mumia was arrested, taken to hospital and then charged with murder. Evidence that Mumia was shot by the cop and that another black male fired the fatal shot before fleeing the scene was suppressed at the trial.

This was the first in a long line of cover ups, false statements, harassment of witnesses and outright obstruction of the defence that lead to Mumia's conviction. Evidence that was admitted included his political affiliations and the obvious conclusion that he had planned to kill a cop for several years now!

Mumia's death warrant was signed by the Governor of Pennsylvania in the dead of night on June the 1st after finding out that Mumia's lawyers were

planning to submit papers for a post conviction appeal on the 5th. The death warrant sentenced Mumia to die on the 17th August 95, leaving the defence with insufficient time to conduct the appeal. On the 7th August, amid world-wide protest against his sentence, Judge Sabo granted a stay of execution just 10 days before he was due to be killed. This was the first stay of execution ever decreed by a judge who has sentenced 31 people to death in his career; all but two were black.

Despite the initial jubilation it seems the stay was a clever tactic designed to quell growing international pressure for Mumia's release. In a statement after the stay was announced, Mumia warned that the stay was engineered to "temper the ardour of opponents of the death penalty, in Philadelphia and elsewhere, temporarily until this series of events is forgotten... wasting precious time that could be used to build a stronger movement, not to 'suspend' an execution - but to stop all executions;... we must mobilise every where for a total abolition of this vestige of racism... and all forms of state murder".

It is obvious that the legal system will not deliver justice to Mumia, the defence are planning to apply to the higher courts, but this is a race against time that Mumia is bound to lose without concerted action outside the courts.

Mumia has been a thorn in the side of the authorities for too long; his whole life has been devoted to the black revolutionary struggle and to exposing racism wherever it lies. He refused to be bought by the lie that voting in token black politicians would transform the lives of poor black Americans; the presiding mayor of Philadelphia who orchestrated the bombing of the MOVE headquarters in 1985 was black.

It is imperative that political pressure be put on the USA government to stop the murder of Mumia. Pickets of the American Embassy are taking place, there are demonstrations happening daily in Philadelphia, and The Friends and Family of Mumia campaign is due to announce an International day of action in the near future.

For further information contact the campaign in Philadelphia on 001 215 476 8812

Incapacity Benefit and Jobseekers Allowance

In April this year "Incapacity Benefit" replaced Invalidity Benefit imposing drastic cuts on the income of those disabled and sick people unable to work. Age and dependants' allowances have been slashed and the additional pension paid to 85% of claimant's abolished. Those who are dependent on Income Support, will have to wait a year rather than the old 6 months before they can get the measly disability premium. The reasoning behind the new benefit was that the Social Security system was being 'abused' by 1000s of scroungers pretending, in collusion with their corrupt GPs, that they were not able to work!

The test

New humiliating "All work tests" are being brought in with Benefits Agency doctors to test the ability of claimants to do irrelevant tasks such as reaching to put on a hat, picking up a bag of potatoes etc. If a claimant fails to reach the arbitrary 15 points in the test, then s/he will be deemed fit for work, thrown off sickness benefit and left to starve or sign on as available for work.

What work?

The Act, of course, ignores the fact that many of those who pass the test will in reality have no chance of finding work. Many disabled people *could* work easily if transport and workplaces were accessible, if health and safety rules were followed, if widespread prejudice amongst employers were to magically disappear overnight, if training were accessible for disabled people etc. However the opposite is true: people with disabilities are the last to be considered for jobs. The 3% minimum quota for employees with disabilities has never been followed, and is about to be abolished anyway in the "Disability Discrimination Bill." It is likely that someone with a mobility difficulty, for

example, and no keyboard skills, could be found capable of "secretarial work" and be disqualified from benefit. *The fact that the claimant could not actually get to work and doesn't have the skills for the job will be irrelevant.*

Catch 22

There is a "right" to appeal against a finding of "capacity to work", however if the claimant continues to insist that they can't work and continues to send in medical certificates there will be a 20% reduction in their benefit until the appeal is heard! Thousands of people will be forced to go through the farce of signing on as available for work, applying for jobs to satisfy the availability for work tests etc. when using the appeal procedure.

Worse to Come? Jobseekers' Allowance

The government is also introducing a new benefit to replace Income Support and Unemployment benefit. It is likely to come in in October 96, and pilot schemes have started in selected areas around the country.

Jobseekers Allowance will give the state new powers to harass the unemployed and force them into low paid, unsafe work. "Claimant Advisers" will be able to issue *Jobseekers Directives* to claimants, directing people to make themselves more employable. This could include having a haircut, removing tattoos, dressing more smartly (difficult when you can only afford second hand clothes), doing training courses, etc. Those who refuse to comply will be disqualified from benefit.

The Implications

The implications for claimants are pretty obvious, but there are also serious implications for benefits agency employees. BA staff have been directed not to offer any assistance with completion of Incapacity Benefit forms.

They will increasingly be forced to inform angry claimants of adverse benefit decisions, leaving staff open to abuse and probably assault. Workers will be closely scrutinised to see that they are enforcing the regulations rigorously. There are bound to be targets for claimant cut offs. Those working in Job Centres will be particularly vulnerable when the new Jobseekers Allowance comes in, as they will be enforcing many of the new regulations and there are generally no security screens in Jobcentres.

It is crucial that claimants groups, disability groups and Benefits Agency workers get together to fight the implications of the Act

Conference on Incapacity Benefit and Jobseekers Allowance.

A meeting of claimants, disability groups, and advice workers was held in Islington in June to discuss the new benefits. About twenty people turned up and the day was spent discussing the details of the benefits, how to claim them, how to get round the regulations and how to fight them collectively.

It was agreed to widely publicise the points system in the new "all work test" and to draw up advisory leaflets on how to avoid being cut off Incapacity Benefit. Similarly a leaflet is to be distributed on the implications of the Jobseekers Allowance. Benefit Agency medical testing centres were to be targeted for action, and dole offices for leafleting. CPSA staff and other relevant unions were to be contacted for joint meetings and hopefully collective action.

A new group has been set up recently called "Incapacity Action"; a network of long term sick and disabled people and supporters. They are already fighting the new Act and have had several successful actions, including disrupting a meeting between Peter Lilley and the Benefits Agency in Balham. For further information on Incapacity Action phone 0181 520 4582 or write to P.O. box 9, 136-138 Kingsland High Street, London E8 2NS. For expert advice on disability benefits, phone the Disability Alliance on 0171 247 8763 (minicom available)

S.N.A.P.

New Action group in Newham

South Newham Action on Policing (SNAP) was formed in November 1993 in the aftermath of the Dray Family Campaign, which successfully fought the prosecution of Tony and Lee Dray for assault on police officers. The group exists to promote the legal rights of people living in South Newham, E. London and to assist those whose rights have been denied. Its stated aim is to "ensure that abuses of police power are properly dealt with, and where inadequacies exist in the way complaints are dealt with, to campaign for change". SNAP is a unique organisation as it draws its main support from the white working class communities in Canning Town and it exists because of the support of the anti-racist group, the Newham Monitoring Project (NMP). The estates of Canning Town have been largely neglected over the last decade and the complacency of the local Labour Party allowed a 33% poll for the BNP in the Beckton ward last May. Despite efforts from a few local groups, the last time there was regular community advice available was in the 1970s - and that was run by the National Front! There is little belief among local people that they can influence the political process and it is this sense of 'disenfranchisement' which makes the position of predominantly white working class communities remarkably similar to that of black communities fifteen years ago. Whilst black people have been forced into fighting for a voice, however, large parts of the south of Newham have politically stood still, providing fertile breeding ground for the BNP.

The driving force behind SNAP is the Dray family who contacted the NMP following the arrest of Lee and Tony, because no-one else would help. The process of running the campaign for the Drays, in which its legal representatives and many of its supporters were black, had an impact challenging the prejudices of many local people. SNAP was formed to continue opposition to police harassment of all sections of the community.

Update: In what has been widely seen as an act of vengeance, Lee Dray was arrested in Plaistow following an assault



on a drug dealer. In the course of the investigations the chief suspects were encouraged to name Lee as the culprit in exchange for lesser sentences. At the trial, contradictory eye witness evidence was undermined by claims that a partial fingerprint on a shard of glass pointed to Lee's guilt. The "forces of Justice" eventually got their way. Lee was sentenced to 5 years on this evidence alone. Contact Lee, c/o Sharon Dray, 13 Alliance Rd, E13

The Flipside of the Economic League

Over the years the EL has conspired to create unemployment. It has gone bust and re-emerged with the assets and without the debts. It has always been a staunch supporter of capitalism, and has certainly learned the classic capitalist tricks. The flipside to capitalist trickery is tricks on capitalists by wannabees. They say when you sup with the devil you need a long spoon, and to what extent have employers been conned over the years?

An auditors clerk recently saw the records of a bankrupt company. In it are the extracts of information supplied in 1986 by the EL under "Anarchists", mysteriously passed on to us. An alphabetical list of less than a hundred names is given, many of which come from the pages of "Freedom". There is one member of "Class War" (the founder), though in this case without an address, two close associates of "Black Flag" (one described as the wife of someone whose name doesn't appear), so far as we can see nobody from the then DAM, two well known intelligence agents, half a dozen animal libbers (one described as an 'animal anarchist') and everyone else is from Scotland, few of whom we can identify; it looks as though they've nicked a petition.

For this the company (based in England) paid £500!

Yoof rules OK?

When Fleet Street closed, the Daily Telegraph split its production, separating the printing process so that clerical, pre-production and post-production staff were employed by nominal separate companies. That way they could take advantage of the Thatcherite anti-union laws (no sympathy strikes). Now the Financial Times is merging its print process with the Daily Telegraph. This means a drastic reduction in staff. All personnel have been advised to individually "re-apply" for their jobs, with new rates of pay and conditions.

People can belong to unions but no negotiations can take place. The individual applications are an ominous trend. Staff over fifty years old have been told they need not trouble to re-apply, as management want a "young strong team" responding to modern day management. They call the older generation of workers "dinosaurs"; they don't want doddering geriatrics of 50 around - On yer bike! The DT (whose readership is generally no so young) and the FT join the company of papers like "Private Eye", who scoffed at Major for becoming PM in his mere 40s. They christened Blair "Bambi" because he was even younger. But 'PE' itself won't employ anyone in production over 35 (far too old and decrepit).

Can one get a job these days much before 25? Puzzled why unemployment is growing? The idea of ten years work in a lifetime representing one's maximum contribution to society, with the rest of one's life doing as one wished in comfort and security, was derided as a utopian socialist concept. How would society manage? But it is, apparently, 'pragmatism'; hardfaced politics, to have it with poverty and degradation at both ends.

Last Rolo in Norwich

Nestlé's decision last year to shut the Norwich factory, which they acquired when they bought Rowntrees, came as little surprise after years of rumours. The company has long been condemned for the harm caused by their baby milk products in the third world. In the 1930s they bankrolled the launch of the Swiss Nazi Party. The nazis' smashing of effective workers' organisation in their factories guaranteed higher profits. Their current yearly profits are £3 billion, obviously not enough.

The Response of Norwich Nestlé Trade Unions

Of the numerous unions that claim to represent the workforce, the largest are USDAW (shop and distribution workers) and the AEEU (engineers and electricians). Their initial reaction to the announcement of the plant closure was decidedly directionless. Following a push from the city council and trades council, who organised a march and rally through the city, they embarked on a public relations campaign. This involved councillors, MPs and the MEP eloquently pleading to the company. A firm of consultants were hired at a cost of thousands of pounds, to come up with a formula which would make the Norwich site attractive to Nestlé - something that Nestlé themselves must already have looked at. This display of hot air wasn't just buying time while the unions geared up for serious resistance, however. As the weeks rolled by, it became clear that it wasn't just a tactic to rely

on the politicians and PR men, it was the whole strategy! A similar strategy two years ago didn't stop the closure of almost every British coal mine. You'd have thought they might have learned.

Snatching defeat from the Jaws of Victory

The most glaring cock-up was the unions' total inaction in the one area capable of stopping the closure. Early on came declarations from York, Halifax and Newcastle workforces that they did not want to take Norwich's work. Here was something to build on. In this closure it is the

into misery, the unions must share the blame for their inaction, their neglect of workplace organisation and futile tactics.

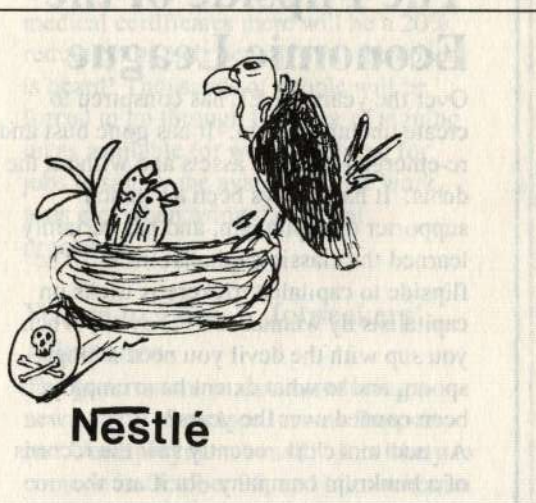
Norwich Solidarity Federation

Following the announcement of the closure Norwich Solidarity Federation (SolFed) wrote to all the unions at the plant with the offer of support in any and every way, particularly internationally, as the French CNT organises at two Nestlé subsidiaries. SolFed informed the unions of the International Workers Association's decision to hold a day of protest, and the

launch of a local support group. To the disappointment of those involved in the support group, the Nestlé unions showed at best indifference, not even bothering to say "no thanks". Following the day of action, the Norwich unions had the gall to tell the local Trades council they were not informed. When the Trades Council was presented with copies of all the correspondence, there was only silence...

A clearer illustration of the bankruptcy of these unions and the need for the alternative methods and principles we promote could not be found. These unions succeeded only in cutting off their noses to spite their faces. The losers are all those who work for Nestlé in Norwich. We will not forget.

From Norwich Solidarity Centre bulletin

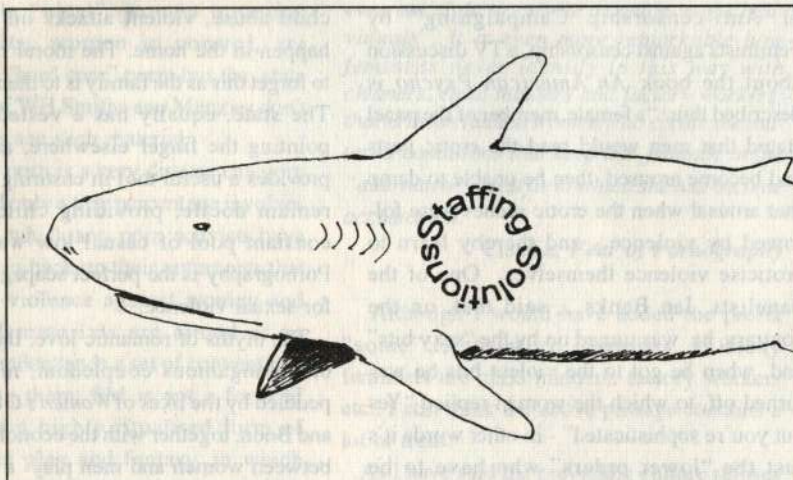


three other chocolate producing plants that hold the key. With only half the time, money and energy put into the hot air campaign, the other plants' reluctance to take Norwich's work could become resolutions to totally black the transfer, installation and renewed production of the Norwich lines.

In not pursuing this, the unions opted to reject resistance and the fight was all but lost. All that remained was posturing. While Nestlé bosses hold ultimate responsibility for shutting the factory and throwing 900 families

Sharks in Norfolk

"Employment agencies" in Norfolk, particularly Staffing Solutions and SRA, have come to light as ripping off the workers they employ. These agencies supply workforces to plants such as Danepak, Watton Produce, Howard Longs International, WH Knights. They take every opportunity to rip off workers - from charging for ear protectors, overalls and hats, to illegal wage deductions for "administration".



Under Health and Safety legislation no worker can be charged for protective equipment by an employer. These outfits try to cover themselves by claiming their workforces are self-employed - a claim that stands up like a bridegroom on a stag night. Deductions for administration are how every employment agency stings the worker. But some agencies not only take the £5 per hour the employer pays passing on only £3 to the worker, they make a further deduction at the end of the

working week. Two of the workers contacted by Norwich Solidarity Centre challenged this and were told "Oh yes, we'll put that right". Clearly the sharks were surprised and didn't want to push their luck, in case word spread.

At times these agencies really got the whole hog. One group of workers bussed in had instead of the daily charge for travel of £1.50 a charge of £8 each per day - the equivalent of £1 per hour. Staffing Solutions have accurately summed up their scam as "being in direct competition with the benefit

system". Norwich Solidarity Centre are targeting these employment agencies to put an end to their robbery of working people, to expose them as the parasites they are and above all to help workers at the sharp end with an effective workplace organisation which will fight these con-artists, rather than wait around for Father Christmas or Tony Blair, whoever arrives first.

Contact Norwich Solidarity Centre, PO Box 73, Norwich NR1

Why We Should Organise Agency Workers

I recently took a train along the north Kent coast. Where once was a landscape of large manufacturing concerns is now a procession of identical industrial estates along the Thames. Most of these firms employ no more than two dozen people directly.

Those that do work for them will often be related to the boss, or at least friendly to them, and unlikely to rock the boat. Busy periods, sick and holiday are covered by employing agency staff. Nor are they alone - local authorities, the post office, hospitals, all do the same. Agency staff have few rights and no organisation.

The additional cost of going through an agency is offset by not having to pay for sickness, training, holiday, maternity etc., throughout the year.

The initiative by Norwich Solidarity Federation (see column to the left) is doubly important. It doesn't ignore those workers who are in a precarious situation, nor does it build up forlorn hopes that official unions can do anything.

But it also stresses that only those who are affected can deal with the problems, and have to take responsibility to do so. Attempts have been made to organise the unorganised before, without taking account of the nature of the industry, such as catering. They have failed because no one will stomach a MacJob for long enough to organise.

High turnover is symptom of workers not being able to fight back on the job. There is a high turnover at Nissan in Sunderland, where real unions are banned by a sweetheart deal, even though it is an area of high unemployment.

To overcome this, we need to look at organising where casual workers are recruited rather than on the shop floor, because there is no guarantee they'll be doing the same thing tomorrow.

MH

For many years now, pornography has been singled out by some feminists as a primary target for activism and propaganda, especially in some anarcho-feminist circles. I found it particularly depressing that the major discussion meeting and action organised by feminists at the Ten Days of Anarchy was targeted against pornography. Am I alone in thinking that in the face of unequal pay, nonexistent childcare facilities, attacks on single parents, the erosion of fertility rights, domestic violence, rape and the promotion of "family values" that to put energy into fighting the depiction of sexually explicit activity is a monumental waste of our time?

This article seeks to argue that anti pornography activism is not only a disastrously misguided tactic in the fight against sexism and violence against women but also lies in direct opposition to any anarchist ideals we might hold.

The anti-porn agenda implicitly demands increased powers of the state; it suppresses honest debate on sexuality and freedom; it drives the visibility of sex industry workers underground, making it near impossible to fight for improved conditions; it removes the responsibility of perpetrators of sexual violence for their actions and ultimately reinforces the very factors that can contribute to sexual violence and women's oppression in the first place.

Porn or erotica?

"What I like is erotica and what you like is pornography" - Ellen Willis

There have been endless circular debates on what constitutes pornography as opposed to erotica. The Collins English Dictionary defines "pornography" as the "explicit depiction of sexual activity in literature, films etc. intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic feelings". It defines "erotic" as "of sexual love, amatory esp. tending to arouse sexual desire or excitement". I can't for the life of me see the difference, except for the mention of the word love. Does this mean that a pornographic image of two people fucking suddenly becomes "erotica" when a caption explains that the couple are "in love"? Maybe it would be even more acceptable if they were wearing wedding rings?

Some feminists have defined pornography as material that is degrading to women. Would this include the Bible, *Women's Own*, Barbara Cartland? Because I find such material highly offensive and degrading, and some "porn" very empowering.

Porn: a legitimate target?

Anti-pornography activism perpetuates moral censorship and stands in the way of an honest debate of sexuality and freedom, argues Lou

The upper classes like to describe the stuff they jack off to as "erotica", classy french films, art etc., and the stuff accessible to the rest of us as "porn". In the article "The wages of Anti-censorship Campaigning" by Feminists against censorship, a TV discussion about the book *An American Psycho* is described thus: "a female member of the panel stated that men would read the erotic parts and become aroused, then be unable to damp that arousal when the erotic scenes were followed by violence - and thereby learn to eroticise violence themselves. One of the panelists, Ian Banks...., said that, on the contrary, he was turned on by the "sexy bits" and, when he got to the violent bits he was turned off, to which the woman replied "Yes but you're sophisticated" - in other words it's just the "lower orders" who have to be protected from such books". I prefer to stick with the dictionary definition as it describes what we are really talking about; sexually graphic material.

Pornography and women's oppression

Some feminists have formed an unlikely alliance with the moral right in their fight against porn. They argue that porn not only degrades women, but that it actually encourages rape, child abuse and sexual violence. The logical conclusion of such thinking is that if we get rid of pornography (whether through state censorship or through direct action against the sex industry) then these symptoms of women's oppression would begin to disappear. If I believed this to be the case, I would be at the forefront of the anti - porn lobby. Unfortunately you only have to take a look at the status of women in countries where porn is illegal, i.e., Saudi

Arabia, Pakistan, etc, and then at countries like Holland where porn is widely available to see how misguided this line of reasoning is.

The fact is that the vast majority of rapes, child abuse, violent attacks on women etc. happen in the home. The moral right want us to forget this as the family is to them sacrosanct. The state, equally has a vested interest in pointing the finger elsewhere, as the family provides a useful tool in ensuring that women remain docile, providing childcare and a constant pool of casual low waged labour. Pornography is the perfect scapegoat to blame for sexual violence.

The myths of romantic love, the superiority of monogamous coupledom, marriage etc. peddled by the likes of *Women's Own* and Mills and Boon, together with the economic disparity between women and men play a far greater part in keeping women in abusive or violent relationships than pornography ever could.

These myths tell us that sexual activity is only acceptable in "loving, caring relationships" preferably between man and wife. Even with these sanctions it is not necessary for the process to be enjoyable. Sex is something that is done to women; women are preferably indifferent or even victims in the sexual arena. Any woman who enjoys sex for its own sake is seen as dirty, unnatural. Sex for women is seen as a transaction, in return she derives economic security, the social acceptance found in being attached to a man. Maybe this is why prostitutes are so abhorred and feared; their transactions of sex for money are blatant, unshrouded by the trappings of romantic love and all its paraphernalia.

These myths are mirrored and propped up by the church, the state, the film industry, advertising, women's magazines, the press etc. We are constantly bombarded with horror stories of "Career Women" who have left it too late to have a baby, others who wax lyrical

about the new found joys of being a housewife; headlines like "Celibacy is back in", "Romance is back"; young girls in America line up to pledge to remain virgins until they marry, sex education is required to be taught with a moral family-based angle, I could go on and on. In stark contrast, pornography defies such values. It celebrates sexual pleasure for its own sake, depicting women who actively want and enjoy sex without having to pay the high price that society demands.

The fact that most readily accessible porn (top shelf material in newsagents) tends to depict women as objects of desire, uses stereotyped images of what a woman should look like and is unimaginative in the extreme, has more to do with our paternalistic censorship laws than it does with the sexist nature of porn itself. Images of mutuality, couples fucking, gay and lesbian material, models who don't conform to the young, slim, shaved female "ideal", women initiating sexual activity, women in control, are widespread in "hard core" porn; but the state and the likes of WH Smiths and Menzies don't see fit to let us see such material.

"Hare cord" porn is a very diverse category of material and only a tiny percentage involves S&M activity, which anti porn activists have pounced upon to back up their arguments that porn leads to violence against women and children. SM materials are aimed at an audience that understands a set of conventions for interpreting them. SM is not a form of violence; it is a highly ritualised form of consensual sex play and fantasy, in which participants go to great lengths to ensure the safety and enjoyment of one another.

There is a world of difference between violent sex and sexual violence. In the former ritualised violence is used to a heighten mutual pleasure, in the latter sexual coercion is used to punish, abuse and terrify; pleasure plays no part, it has a name: rape.

There is no evidence, despite increasingly desperate attempts to find it, that porn encourages sexual violence. There is however one factor that seems prevalent amongst rapists and child abusers. This is a tendency for abusers to have had repressive upbringings, where sex, masturbation etc. was frowned upon, often coupled with religious and sexist values. The very values held so dearly by the anti porn campaigners on the right that feminists have aligned themselves with.

Child porn by its very definition can not be consensual. Children have so little power or access to sexual information in our society that it would be near impossible for a child to give informed consent in the production of pornographic images. As far as I am concerned

child porn always involves coercion, and is therefore unacceptable. However, once again it constitutes a minuscule proportion of available porn. Most child abusers will never have seen such material, or be interested in it. In fact it has been found that child abusers are less likely to possess commercial pornography than are other men in the general population. If we are to eradicate rape, sexual assault and child abuse in our society we would do much better to fight the underlying factors that allow it to happen, such as rape mythology, sexism, the lack of access to sex education for children, religion etc. than to waste our precious time in fighting an irrelevance such as porn.

The sex industry

"It is remarkable how sudden feelings of empathy and identification with 'exploited' women surge up in the breasts of feminists when they think of workers in the sex industry - pornography is 'an assault on women, our dignity, our humanness, our personal safety, even our right to survive as autonomous individuals'. It is even more remarkable how feminists never identify in this way with cleaners, child minders and factory workers; that is those hidden women who create the material conditions that keep the feminist in the 'alternative' lifestyle to which she has become accustomed."

- Claudia, *Fear of Pornography*

Although I would have added the prefix "some" to the word feminists, as many feminists are child minders, factory workers etc., I still think the above passage contains a lot of truth.

As I have said the prevailing culture refuses to accept a female sexuality, and consequently many people have a hard time believing that any woman would become involved in the sex industry voluntarily. She must have been coerced, she is by definition a victim.

People seem to have difficulty separating the images in porn from the conditions of the workers. A model is no more likely or unlikely to have been coerced into modelling for a bondage shot than for a calendar pin up. If we are to give our support to actors and models in the industry, we should be asking whether or not they have been coerced and under what conditions they are working, regardless of the nature of the image involved. Many women find work in the sex industry far less exploitative, demeaning and stressful than traditional women's work, such as waitressing, cleaning, bar work etc. and the wages can be far higher. However exploitation, as in any industry certainly does exist. If we are to make any headway in improving conditions for sex workers we can not afford to be judgemental. As anarchists, surely we recognise that most work in our capitalist system is demeaning and socially unnecessary, we can't pick and choose who to support due

to moral squeamishness. The Anti - MacDonalds campaign has finally realised that calling MacDonalds workers "scum" will get them nowhere, and have recognised that workers need our support in fighting for improved conditions. Similarly in the sex industry, maligning sex workers could eventually lead to them siding with the bosses as they become more and more marginalised. The more the sex industry is driven underground due to the pressures of censorship and moral indignation, the easier it is for women to be coerced, ripped off and abused in their workplaces. For example the worst excesses of pimping could be eradicated if prostitutes were able to openly work in brothels without fear of arrest and the dangers of working on the streets.

Conclusion

There is much in porn that I find abhorrent, offensive and degrading, there is also much (though not enough) that turns me on, is empowering and exciting. The same could be said of fiction, films and art. I do not believe that porn is in any way responsible for our sexist society, although, like any other form of media, it can mirror and reinforce its values. We need to examine our often hysterical and knee jerk responses to porn, and have an honest debate on all the issues surrounding sexuality. Ultimately I look forward to the day when women and men can write, paint, photograph, film and express in a myriad of ways their sexual fantasies without the fear of censure from either the state or the moral "guardians" of either the left or the right.



WHAT IS THE MIDDLE CLASS?

Prime Minister John Major referred to Tories achieving a "classless society". He was referring to the gradual move from the English class system to the American. In England the survival of the old upper class is ensured by the constitutional monarchy, against which the middle class is beginning to rebel, or at least not respect so much.

The old upper class has managed to retain influence (where once it had supreme power) by social snobbery. The upper class classically retain certain areas for themselves, such as the leadership of the Church and Army, the judges, the Foreign Office and the upper reaches of the Civil Service. But now the bourgeoisie is moving in. Power in the Tory Party has shifted from the patricians to those whose only God is Money and of whom Baroness Thatcher is still the prophet.

The idea that a multi-millionaire could be excluded from an Establishment of which slobes like the Marquesses of Blandford and Bristol, the late Lord Moynihan or Lord Lucan are members by birth has lingered on in Britain. It is now moving to the American conception of class. The middle class, now on top, has finally won its revolution and creates its own myth, not one of Birth and Breeding, but that anyone with ability can rise to any position regardless of birth. It is equally false.

Many Russians have fallen for the notion that the end of State communism would bring the American dream and they would be driving their Cadillacs at week-ends to dachas complete with swimming pools. The favoured few had this under Stalinism. What was in power, generating wealth for itself, was the Civil Service and the politicians. It was as hereditary as the middle class system, since wealth begets education and opportunity, though not based solely on birth as is the aristocratic system. Trotskyists demur at the term 'ruling class' to describe this class, but what else were they? Whatever they should be termed, they are now determined to retain their status in a ruling class capacity.

The myth of Marxist-Leninism was that all in Russia were working-class, including the favoured few with wealth and power. It was supposed to be a workers' state. The parallel myth of Western capitalism is that all are (or could be) middle class, which becomes the middle of nothing!

What they mean is everyone functions in some way - even the Queen opens bazaars. But a once productive class is being pushed into dead end occupations



servicing the rich. Production is being switched to Third World countries so that it can be done as cheaply and shoddily as possible, and the pretence of generosity by aid programmes maintained. On the other end of the scale, interesting and glamorous jobs that were once entirely working class are becoming available almost exclusively to the gilded youth of the middle class, occasionally the formerly upper class too. The theatrical profession is a typical example, where the 'rogues and vagabonds' of Elizabethan times became the trod-upon outcasts of the eighteenth century and the working stiffs of the 19th, but by the second half of the 20th century, pampered darlings, almost exclusively middle class. Journalism, and by extension the media, is another instance. Sub-editors, and even editors, once came from the same class as printers. Now all but a very few specialists come from the posh universities and are in a position to make sure authors will be of the same social class.

The Mandarins

There is in any case another class, thought of as middle class but depending for its

status on power, not profit. Like Stalin's bureaucracy, it is a ruling class though it is dependent on the politicians. It may make a profit or not. It may run a quango or a monopoly, a multi-national or a university, a public company or a State industry or its individual members can pass from one to the other. These are the new lords and occasionally ladies of creation, whether one thinks of them as Soviet commissars, company directors or old-style Chinese mandarins. They call themselves the meritocracy. They are becoming the most powerful in the dominant middle class, the most likely to aspire to becoming a new aristocracy.

The hangers-on

Marxist-Leninism claimed in Russia everyone was working class, whether proletarian, commissar or gulag slave. American capitalism claims all are middle class and there is no class division. British

capitalism adds a few more illusions to this by way of educational snobbery or the honours system. The lies put over by the Hollywood Dream Factory or the Lie Factories of Britain's press lead many to suppose that they are not working class when they patently are, or even that the working class has ceased to exist.

The middle, now dominant, class embraces the very rich, the parasites on business, the business careerist, the upper ranks of the civil service, and the hangers-on to certain social values. It does not include those who acquire property instead of spending their wages on booze and fags, or have a mortgage or a car bought by their own work. The working class in good times can prosper, but remain under capitalism. If active in economic struggle they can, when labour is scarce, earn the same as, or more than, the lower middle class. It is a fallacy to suppose that prosperity changes their status.

Those with specialist skills sometimes fool themselves, invariably to their own detriment, that they have different class interests, and identify with the ruling class. Nationalism and patriotism are

used for the same purpose: to identify with the State and so with one's own exploitation. This obscures the issue, but does not change it.

We do not have to accept being ground down by parasites upon society. The destruction of heavy industry does not necessarily mean the destruction of the productive class itself but of its organisations within heavy industry. The alternative to heavy industry need not be pauperism, which is being accepted today as if it were a natural catastrophe, but co-operation based on self-employment. Self-employed, small local collectives and a new kind of co-operative movement can link up with other forms of industrial organisation. University-processed Marxism sneers at the independent worker as "petty bourgeois". But the value of artisan organisation as part of the working class struggle has been proven time and again in industrial disputes and in revolutions. Today the capitalist not only does not give work but actively takes it away. To be strong enough to fight back we need to set our own work agenda. In fighting back it is not enough make reforms, to curtail profits or to circumvent the effects of wage slavery. These are desirable but leaves the dangerous capitalist beast of prey wounded but all the more dangerous. The class system has to be wiped out.

a.m

Labour - The Myth of 1945

Tony Blair is an easy target for the left, who berate him as a reformist, and hark back to the golden days of the 1945-51 Labour governments. This illustrates a peculiar way with words. Blair is no more a reformist than Major. He doesn't want to reform anything, unlike someone like Benn or Militant Labour, who wish to see the system reformed to their own interests. Attlee's government was reformist, in that it brought about some reforms, such as nationalisation. Its claims to be socialist in any way pale next to any account of its actions. Labour was so concerned with the condition of dock workers that it sent troops into break a strike in Surrey Docks within six days of taking office. The use of conscript labour broke the strike. Labour repeated this in September during a national docks dispute that began in Birkenhead.

Troops were further used against strikers in Smithfield meat market and Southampton dockers in 1946, lorry drivers in 1947, dockers again in 1948, 1949 and 1950, power station workers in Belfast and London in 1949, and gasworkers in 1950.

This wasn't the end of Labour's anti-working class actions. With the support of the TUC a policy of "wage restraint" was implemented. Family allowances were introduced from an idea of the Liberals and Tories. They were intended to help the poorest workers with large families, and defuse pressure for wage rises. This pay restraint was only intended for the workers, though. MPs salaries were raised from £600 to £1000, and ministers received thousands.

Labour's foreign policy was equally reactionary. British occupation forces in Indonesia and Vietnam crushed local uprisings with the help of the former colonialists and captured Japanese soldiers. When Persia nationalised its oil industry, Britain sent gunboats to intimidate Teheran. In 1951, British troops occupied key areas in Egypt when the Egyptian Parliament voted to abrogate the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 relating to the Suez Canal.

Spanish anti-fascists who had been held conscripted in to forced labour under the Germans were held in prison camps. It was a full year before public opinion forced Labour to release the Spaniards. Labour also deported anti-fascists back to Spain, where they faced torture, prison and execution.

Conscription was carried on in peacetime until pressure from Army top brass got the Tories to scrap it in the fifties. Labour *did* abolish the medieval Witchcraft Act. But they retained the Blasphemy Act, thinking it might come in useful later.

And *this* was Labour's finest hour!

SECTARIAN NOTES

- Everyone remembers well known grasses Steve Nally and Tommy Sheridan and their comments after the poll tax riot, when they said they would "name names". The line currently put out by Militant Labour, home of more than one police informer, is that Nally's comments were distorted by anarchists in the media. If only!
- In Red Action 71 we are treated to a "theoretical" piece on the "dictatorship of the proletariat" which tries to paint Marx and Engels as "streetfighting men" and Bakunin as someone who couldn't cut the mustard. Engels was so into street fighting he is recorded as crossing the street to avoid a mob of striking workers who were throwing stones at police and scabs. Street fighting man? - you must be joking!
- Old habits die hard it seems, among the homophobes of Militant. When a contact recently left a South London branch and started associating with Class War, a full timer phoned up Class War and warned them not to have anything to do with him as he was gay (true) and a child molester (a lie and a homophobic stereotype The Sun would be proud of). There's an insight into the way they think among the tapeworm trots.

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin Interview

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin was twenty years old when he received a double life sentence for Hijack. A grassroots activist, former Black Panther and author of "Anarchism and the Black Revolution". He talks to Black flag about about the past, present and future of the Black Revolutionary Movement. What anarchism has to offer it and why he rejects the role of "token" Black Anarchist.

BF: How did you first become active politically?

LKE: Well, I got active in the civil rights movement of the early 60s, particularly the sit-in movement. This started in Greensboro in 1960 and came quickly to a number of other cities, including Chattanooga, my home town. I was a grassroots youth radicalised by these activities.

Out of that agitation, the Student non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC) was born. SNCC

was created after most of the sit-ins had started. Ella Baker, secretary of Dr Martin Luther King, recognised how important the sit-ins were and that the adult movement hadn't done anything in a while. She called a mass meeting in South Carolina, which was attended by 300 black southern activists and 200 white activists and observers. SNCC was originally meant to be a way of co-ordinating these struggles.



It went on to become a unique organisation. It was anti-authoritarian in that it had no leadership (certainly not at the beginning). Power was in the hands of the membership and grassroots organisers. It was exceptional in that it did not emphasise charismatic leadership, but instead field organisers went into communities and built autonomous organisations. Field organisers would develop a person or persons, who already commanded respect in the community, into local leaders and subsequently back out, unless asked for support or advice.

It was also unique in that it was secular, though in the early stages there were people who were motivated by Christian doctrine. SNCC won many of the major victories that have been credited to others, particularly King. This myth is to build faith in the government and belief in leadership, when in fact the masses make the struggle and the revolution.

Even in Montgomery Alabama, King was picked as the public face of the struggle by E.D. Nixon, who was the local organiser. Nixon planned the bus boycott, but his importance has been lost to history. He was a grassroots activist, unlike most at

the time who were middle class. The Struggle lasted over a year, and the masses made it win.

BF: How did you go from the SNCC to the Panthers? Is seems like a big leap because of the non-violence of the SNCC.

LKE: SNCC laid the grounds for the Panthers. SNCC lasted ten years, but in 1966 started to reassess the struggle. The phrase "Black Power" came through the SNCC, and SNCC wasn't a non-violent organisation. It saw non-violence as a tactic not a principle. When SNCC met Malcom X he impressed upon them the need for armed self defence. SNCC also agitated for local communities to be armed to repel racist attacks and police brutality.

In SNCC's Black Power phase there were more black revolutionary tactics. But most of SNCC came from the black middle-class and most had very little association with black workers, which is why they made the mistake of redirecting their energies away from their base in the south towards the north and west. This changed the politics and made the organisation weaker.

Ideologically, SNCC provided the politics of armed self defence

and the symbols, (the black panther was originally from the SNCC chapter in Lowndes County, Alabama) to the Black Panther Party (BPP).

In 1967 the BPP and SNCC merged and memberships united. I used to sell the Black Panther paper and consider myself a member. The merger was short-lived, and while it lasted the BPP felt SNCC should be its southern wing and didn't organise chapters in the South until the 70s.

SNCC had won most of the civil rights gains - voting, freedom rides, desegregation. In 1966 it analysed that racism and economic inequalities still existed, and that the Vietnam War, with its increasing number of Black dead, were political issues they had to come out against. This attracted the BPP. The alliance died because of government subversion and leadership egos, SNCC just faded away.

The BPP were one of several Black Panther Parties - originally from the Oakland in the Bay Area. They came to the fore because they had a more advanced programme and were able to dramatise their actions. The BPP was made up of grassroots youth.

The BPP had a different class composition and a different kind of style-hard language, direct talk and encouraging resistance to the "pigs".

The Local BPP attracted members and I stayed in from the SNCC. I was isolated because they didn't really build in the south at that time, except for New Orleans. The BPP had an advanced social programme but in the first few years it was mainly military confrontations with the police.

Then they became a political party - part of the world black revolution - denounced the black bourgeoisie and called for new black struggles. They implemented "survival programmes" before the welfare state started by federal government, which won them respect. This included "Breakfast for Children" programme, which served breakfast across 40 chapters. They provided free clothing, shoes and medical care. The BPP captivated most of the US left and influenced their programmes. Some formed Panther style organisations. Even today the idea of a Panther is someone who is resolute and would fight for their rights against the state.

However, there were internal problems, such as tight leadership, who were also tightfisted. There was a division between cadres and leaders. There were abuses of women and individual members for idiotic reasons. Police informers got in and even committed murders. What really killed the BPP was the military and police action. The COINTELPRO conspiracy murdered at least 39 members of the BPP as well as other black militants, and jailed hundreds. People were summonsed before grand juries. There was a legal, political and police offensive which disrupted the Party's work. Funds were diverted from the programmes into legal defence and bail.

This came down on me. Rebellion took place in Chattanooga. I was summonsed to testify before a grand jury and refused. I'd been harassed for some time - this was another in a long line. I could have been jailed for five years, and the local jail was a chain gang - no way. I left the City for Atlanta hoping it

would blow over. But the FBI got involved and circulated bulletins nationwide giving shoot to kill orders, so I had to get out of the country.

There had been some hijackings to Cuba. I got a gun, went to the airport, took over a plane and flew to Cuba. The Cuban authorities questioned me and took me to Hijack Hotel. Eldridge Cleaver was also in Cuba and in dispute with the government there. Cuba wouldn't act on him, so they jailed us and started deporting us. I was supposed to go to Guinea but instead ended up in Czechoslovakia. While the Cubans got me arrested and turned me over to the US authorities. I escaped into East Germany but was captured, smuggled into Berlin, tortured for a week and brought back to the States. I was put on trial in a small town in Georgia and sentenced to two life sentences. It was the heaviest sentence for air piracy up to that time, because I wouldn't show any regret or apologise. They drugged me at my trial so I couldn't make statements and tried me in a small redneck town. I was only 20. It brings you face to face with your own morality at an early age and puts you to the test. I was not going to compromise or let them see me weak. I would be part of, or leading, any resistance. But you've got to have some reason to do this.

I started analysing my philosophy and my life. Thinking about my experiences in Eastern Europe I started looking at an alternative method, theory and strategy of revolution. All these in a manner of speaking, led me to anarchism. I was not happy with local anarchists in the US - they were too middle class, white and it was pretty much a countercultural

scene. But this didn't stop me working with other anarchists around the world who had written to me. I desired a new way forward for the black revolution - which had been smashed by the state and finished off by reformism and neo-colonialism. The original writing around my book came from this. Kropotkin influenced me most - I was engaging in all kinds of debate, hostile and friendly. It made me reevaluate what I had been involved in, particularly the authoritarian problems in the BPP and SNCC in its later stages, and the black movements of the 70s and 80s.

Anarchism in the US has always been an immigrant thing - the Jews, the Germans of the original International Working Peoples Association, the Italians of the 30s and 40s and so on. Why it should suddenly seem threatening that there was a black anarchist I don't know. Blacks and hispanics will surely constitute the backbone of the US anarchist movement in the future.

My prison writings called for an international anarchist resistance movement and a new international Working Peoples Association. This won me a following in Europe, Africa and among Australian aborigines. I was made an honorary member of one of the Aboriginal tribes. I distributed stuff in Nigeria. I don't know what impact it had, but I have to believe someone read this stuff.

Since the fall of communism even more people are looking at anarchism as a serious alternative, as set out by past and even some current movements. Especially if we were to speak to more so called ordinary people. The real political conversion came from contacts with

anarchists around the world. In Europe there was a campaign to get my freedom, by the Anarchist Black Cross (Stuart Christie, Albert Meltzer and Miguel Garcia) and Help A Prisoner Oppose Torture in the Netherlands. This sharpened my beliefs and made me more serious about anarchism as a force for black revolution. I never saw myself as a token black anarchist, but as someone to apply anarchism to the black community.

My other writings dealt with how the movement should have a predominant class struggle tendency. I never thought lifestyleists would still be in the ascendancy - we need to go further than rebellion.



Letters to prisoners are especially important, to reach them at certain stage and to talk to them about this. The main thing is the contact with the black movement. I got particular support from the Australian Aborigines.

It is important for anarchists to make contact with the black movement, even if you don't agree with them, as it may be possible to change their politics. They may adopt some core of anarchist politics and go deeper and build their own autonomous formation - they don't need white people telling them what to do.

People have to find their own path. It is always good to keep those bridges open - we shouldn't be sectarian, be partisan instead. I got out in 1983 and immediately started doing anti-racist work in Chattanooga. Lots of people were dying in custody. When the son-in-law of the local police chief killed 66 year old Wadie Suttles in jail we started a ten year campaign which drove this bastard from office. Since 83, I've concentrated on local organising - fighting the Klan and the police. Though there's purportedly a new South, the same kind of racist murders, economic exploitation etc goes on. From 83-93 I worked in Chattanooga, which made me current with 90s struggles and put me in contact with other activists, some of whom were anarchists. I came back into anarchism in 93 and have been trying to find a place in it ever since.

BF: What are your criticism of anti-fascist and anti-racist organisations?

KE: The role of white anti-fascists is not usurp the role of people of colour. We must build a mass movement against racism, this is understood by all independent black activists. We need to challenge the fascists politically, not just beat them on the street, by mobilizing the progressive wing of the working class into a cohesive coalition. This is possible. Vanguard against vanguardism is no good - a section of the class cannot substitute for mass action. This needs to be a broad based initiative under a radical banner, it won't win with an undemocratic vanguard strategy. It must have its own agenda, not that of the vanguard parties. This

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin Interview

is one of the reasons blacks don't come out on demos.

White anarchists need to support black organisers in terms of resources. It must be remembered that the police state, in alliance with the KKK, was effectively nazi in the past, and the Klan machine had control over state apparatus of a number of states during the 20s and 30s.

BF: Can you tell us about the organisation you are part of?

LKE: Well, it's called the National Federation of Black Community Partisans, and it's an anti-authoritarian organisation of black radicals. It's non-political in that it doesn't support parties. It's revolutionary in programme and attempts to use the black communities as a base. It's somewhat based on affinity/direct action movement I raised in "Anarchism and the Black revolution". Ideology is one of black autonomy, a conglomeration of black revolutionary and anti-authoritarian politics. You don't have to be an anarchist to join. The black authoritarian tendency differs from us in that we are not xenophobic, we do not want a nation state, but advocate other solutions. We do not simply aim for power, but to empower the masses.

BF: A lot of your ideas in the book advocate mutual aid solutions to the pressing problems of the black community, with community organisation supplanting the state and driving it out. How do

you envisage this situation of dual power?

LKE: Our ideas of dual power means that an opposing force would battle with the State, but on the Community's terms, not the State's. Dual Power is not an



end in itself, it is an effort to delegitimise authority and fight the ruling class strategy of using black congressmen etc. It is a counter power to oppose every aspect of the State's ability to have power over and police our communities. That's the intention, it's not meant to be permanent situation. The movement must be the people.

BF: What's your opinion of MOVE and what relations do you have?

LKE: We have good relations. Some consider them the first black anarchist formation. Regardless of some of the peculiarities of their politics (ie deference to John Afrika) their politics are anarchist, including environmental and animal rights

platforms, they're against government as an institution, in favour of autonomous communities, co-operative lifestyle and society. The problem has been conservative anarchist-purists who refuse to accept it, except in Philadelphia. MOVE were the first organisation since the BPP to advocate black armed self defence and I have great respect for them. They have all the essentials of an anarchist political formation.

BF: Do you have contact with the black anarchists in prison?

LKE: There's a lot of contact with black activist prisoners, as well as a great deal of interest. They're looking for a new direction. From my personal experience, letters from Europe, Africa and Australia kept me going, and put prison officials under the gun and prevented worse things happening. In many cases the US left don't write.

BF: Generally, from your writings and talking to you, you're very optimistic about prospects for anarchism, and black revolution:

LKE: I've been at this 15 years and more people than my self have come forward. The Federation is small in number but high in quality. We have veterans of labour, student and community movements, as well as ex-prisoners and 60s struggle veterans. We're not going to get trapped into single issue campaigns. I had no idea of this federation - people came to me after my speaking tour. People are looking for answers.

Fighting unions meet in Nepal

Members of the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers Association (IWA) and the Swedish Central Organisation of Workers (SAC) attended an international union conference in Nepal in December 1994. The conference was hosted by the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT - see BF 205) and Asia Pacific Workers Solidarity Links (APWSL), under the banner "Strengthen Pro-Worker Trade Unionism, oppose privatisation". For us, as anarchists, there are several interesting things to come out of this meeting.

Firstly, there is a growing militancy among Asian workers in fighting for their rights and against what the rich countries impose, particularly through agencies like the IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organisation. Secondly, there is the interest in anarcho-syndicalist ideas expressed by some of the participants along with the willingness of those calling themselves communists to behave in an undogmatic way. And thirdly, there are the positive programmes arising from the conference, particularly those addressing the status of women.

The conference was attended by representatives of unions and workers institutions from New Zealand, Bangladesh, India, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Taiwan, and the Asia Monitor Resource Centre in Hong Kong, as well as those mentioned above.

The only real difference we would have with most of the conference summary is the congratulation of the new "workers government" in Nepal. However, it is important for us to remember that Nepal has only had a form of democracy for the last four years, and people's expectations are very high.

Much of the rest of the conference summary deals with the activities of international capitalism, particularly economic liberalisation and privatisation. There is a clarity in these contributions which is never matched in the British trade union movement. A whole section of the conference dealt with the problems of women workers both as union members and in the labour force as a whole. Workshops discussed the nature of pro-worker trade unionism and action plans to follow up the conference. GEFONT will be co-ordinating this work. The action plans covered three areas, namely action opposing economic liberalisation and privatisation, action to promote pro-worker trade unionism, and action to promote the interests of working women and increase the participation of women in trade unions. The specific action proposed included organising a strike on May 1st 1995 against the IMF and World Bank and their economic liberalisation policies. Further there will be educational awareness campaigns, including environmental degradation and organising links between workers in the same transnational corporations. The unions concerned will hold actions on March 8th, International Womens' Day to draw attention to the struggles of women workers. They will also promote networking among garment unions with a view to encouraging women's leadership, as there are so many women in this sector.

The conference also defined what is meant by "pro-worker trade unionism", which has so many parallels to anarcho-syndicalism that it is worth reprinting here:

Pro-worker trade unionism means unionism that defends the interests of the working class. It is unionism that is independent, mass based, democratic and militant. It is unionism that opposes the economic liberalisation and privatisation policies forced on the world by institutions representing the global financial elite. Trade unionism is in itself political as its aim is to empower workers.

Pro-worker trade unionism recognises the double oppression of women, the rapidly increasing proportion of women in the new global workforce and the difficulty that women have in gaining leadership positions in trade unions. It strives to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment, trafficking of women and other anti-women aspects of society.

Pro-worker trade unionism organises for the abolition of child and bonded labour. It must also be involved in organising the informal or unorganised sector which consists of more than 90% of the workforce in some countries.

We call on the international trade union organisations around the world to unite around a programme of defending the interests of the international working class against the anti-worker policies imposed by the IMF-World bank, GATT/World Trade Organisation, the Group of Seven, OECD, and the host of regional trading blocks (like NAFTA and the EU).

We commit ourselves to work tirelessly to strengthen pro-worker trade unionism in our own organisations, to seek the broadest possible unity with other unions, working class and peoples organisations to defend and extend the interests of workers throughout the world and to oppose the anti-worker anti-people policies promoted by the global elite.

On the principle of worker internationalism we commit ourselves to work together across national boundaries, across religious, cultural and ethnic divides and equally as women and men.



The French stay-in strikes (1934-36)

Prior to the First World War French trade unions were so far ahead of socialist trade unionism that the French word 'syndicalism' became synonymous with what in France and Italy is now called revolutionary syndicalism (of which anarcho-syndicalism is a variation). The French syndicalists not only carried out industrial action, but used physical action against the State and taught members self-management. They favoured direct action and rejected parliamentarism. The war distracted most workers by patriotic revival, and during conscription the politicians seized the organisation. After the War the Communist Party captured the CGT (trade union confederation) from the reformists. Was anarchism in the dustbin of history? As on many occasions since, it proved to be merely in the filing cabinet.

In the thirties came the Depression, tied up in France with the nationalist feeling that France had been betrayed by her Allies and left to shoulder war debts after being the main slaughterground. Fascist-led riots on the streets brought out the fury of workers, then under no nationalist illusions. Anarchists were foremost in fighting the Royalist, Action Francaise and Fascist parties. On several occasions juries would not convict anarchists (even on murder charges) against fash.

The fight against fascism

Provoked by the drastic cuts, and against both war and fascism, the workers exploded. In 1934 the idea of a social general stay-in strike, so long advocated by the old CGT came into reality. The strikes came about spontaneously, beginning in Paris. The Communist Party which dominated it was still in its red era and used the strikes to whip up enthusiasm for its electoral success. The strikers were demanding not just increases in pay and social benefits but an end to unemployment, and implementation of a 40 hour week. The use by employers of

fascist thuggery provoked the clashes that were a feature of 1934. Many became convinced the strike successes could be solidified by political action. The CP incorporated these aims into its programme and formed a United Front with socialists (excluding both anarchists and anyone too far to the extreme left). It purported to unite those opposed to capitalism, imperialism and fascism. But not so much that they would also include those opposed to parliamentarism.



By 1935 the Communist Parties had decided on a policy of toning down social revolution in favour of unity against Nazi Germany. They formed the Front Populaire - 'People's Front' and swept into power under Socialist Leon Blum in 1936. The Communists entered the Government. In the euphoria that resulted the workers thought they had obtained victory. They began to occupy the factories, presenting increased demands for implementation of the reforms that had been demanded, plus the expectation of the CGT pressing for workers control of key industries.

The Nature of the Strikes

It had long been a syndicalist proposition that it was ineffective to stay out of work and allow the employer to starve his workers back and recruit scabs to do their work. Staying in presented a revolutionary challenge to the employers, locked out of

their own premises. The tactic spread to America and was used again in the sixties. The workers, not isolated in their own homes, felt more confident in the outcome. Solidarity was strengthened. Those who wanted to cave in simply had to walk out. In some of the Paris factories there was a carnival atmosphere, a feeling that they were one step away from revolution.

The Front Populaire

This was not at all what the Front Populaire intended to happen. Leon Blum is often depicted as indecisive because of his hesitation to be seen aiding Spain. But he was decisive enough in calling out the troops to crush the workers who had always defended him personally. When attacked walking alone in a seemingly empty street by Fascist thugs, the Prime Minister had been defended by workmen who clambered down from scaffolding and up from excavations in the road, wielding bricks and picks. Now the same gentleman turned up in the industrial suburb of Clichy, in evening dress fresh from the Opera, to witness the conscripts invading the factories and shooting down the workers on orders of his Government.

The wave of strike actions continued through the government of the Front Populaire. The Communist Party played both sides of the game, on the one hand claiming to be leading the workers through the CGT, on the other hand suppressing the strikes through their participation in the Government until it fell. Daladier took over as Prime Minister, determined to get the strikers back to work and proceed on the basis of strong national defence, which in the end proved totally useless. Having defeated the workers at home Daladier led a demoralised France into the war.

When the Nazis occupied France, the dossiers prepared on the 'trouble-makers' who had fomented strikes were handed over by police chief Chiappe lock, stock and barrel. The bourgeoisie were delighted to see the Germans take the odium of settling their debts.

Albert Meltzer

Barricade Books Up Against It

Barricade Books is a new radical bookshop in Melbourne, Australia. On Monday 3rd July 1995 at 2pm, five armed police raided the shop. With unsigned warrants, they barged in waving their guns about making threats. After vandalising the shop and house, they confiscated stock which they deemed to be obscene. This was two t-shirts, one with a semi erect penis and a picture of Christ, and the other said "Fuck the World's Police", as well as a gay political pamphlet.

Barricade Books are continuing to fight against censorship and police repression, and ask for your solidarity. They have also faced attacks from nazis, religious nutters and the usual range of bigots. Write to them at: 115 Sydney Road, Brunswick VIC 3056.



Maori militants do the haka against police trying to end the occupation of Moutua Gardens in Whanganui. The Maoris are fighting for control over their ancestral lands. Though this occupation is now over, more will occur now the Spring is here.

answers to quiz

1. The Fascists welcomed Mafia help, especially in southern Italy. Mussolini at first turned a blind eye to their not dissimilar business extortions in return for their services in smashing the workers' halls and collectives. On the Duce's triumphal tour in Sicily with the Mafia chief, the latter expressed surprise he brought so many armed guards. He assured his dear friend Benito nobody would dare attack him while under his protection, hardly the most tactful remark to a dictator.
2. All English translations of Brian Merriman's satirical 'Midnight Court', for instance, were banned; but the original Gaelic version was untouched, as only scholars understood it. Each summer the Merriman Society's Summer School celebrates bawdy unexpurgated Gaelic classics for intellectuals, unavailable to the majority of Irish citizens mostly unable to speak the official language.
3. He warned us against the diversions of football and cricket, and the danger of boasting about our military might, in case we were led to forget to prepare for yet another Imperialist war.
4. Josephine Baker, erotic nude dancer at the Folies Bergere, despite (in a way because of) her visibility as a leading Parisian star (also Black), was an accepted courier with all sections of the French Resistance. The US journalist Thomas J. Hamilton could not understand at the time her readiness to compromise with the censorship which obliged her to "appear on the Madrid stage with more clothes than the average American preacher's wife". But it was a way to enter Spain to link the two Resistance movements.
5. No Members of Parliament (between elections) have ever lost their basic job for any reason, sexual, financial or criminal (even treason), unless resulting in imprisonment (not always then). When MPs reach high office and lecture other people on their alleged shortcomings, despite a contradiction in their own life, they become ridiculed. If demoted to their normal job description as a result, they revert to their old salary but moonlight with other highly paid jobs in the media, commerce etc. until the scandal blows over. If such standards could apply to the public, the sting would be taken out of redundancy.

THEY WERE EXPENDABLE

The forgotten fighters of the SOE

On May 6th of this year the Special Operations Executive celebrated their achievements with a meeting around their monument at Valencay in central France. Unnoticed among the many celebrations of victory this year, the ceremony was boycotted by the the French Government. The volunteers who literally dropped in on France from Britain in 1941 were controlled by a secret arm of British Intelligence, set up by spy chief Maurice Buckmaster and under orders from Churchill (apparently without Cabinet approval) but distrusted even by other British military and espionage agencies.

Only the insistence of Mrs Pearl Cornioley (formerly Witherington), now 80 a surviving veteran of parachute jumps into Europe kept alive the memory of the 'Buck networks', most of whom did not qualify for war pensions nor even, when they lost their lives, for the dubious honour of having their names in stone on war memorials. One cannot doubt the courage, dedication and achievements of the SOE agents in the field. They were manipulated used by the sinister Buckmaster as expendable. Theirs was if need be a suicide mission. He realised this was a job that could only be done by enthusiasts.

However, certainly by the time he set up the SOE, there were many other secret operations, those of the Gaullists and other French patriots, those of the Communists, and the Maquis, set up in the south by Spanish Anarchists. What need was there for yet another band of saboteurs? Mr Churchill wanted to make sure British interests were served by an organisation taking orders from Whitehall, and Buckmaster also saw the opportunity of using 'expendable' people to cover up and take the flak for his main Intelligence activities.

According to the International Herald Tribune, SOE agents smuggled Francois Mitterrand (later French President) to England, though he never acknowledged his debt to them and stayed away from Valencay. The IHT puts this down to French resentment at somebody else taking the credit for French resistance activities. The orders to the SOE concerned military matters. It was a constant source of irritation to Buckmaster that the enthusiasts on whom he had to rely did not see the distinction between blowing up bridges to delay military reinforcements and 'wasting time' on sabotaging deportations, for instance.

..they might have changed history. At the very least they would not have been betrayed.

Mrs Cornioley, French-educated and speaking the language fluently, like Odette and others whose stories have been written and filmed, was able to survive. Most 'expendables' could not possibly survive. Our comrade Hilda Monte is one such (a resume of her story has appeared in previous issues of Black Flag and is dealt with in more detail in my own autobiography, to be published in the coming October). Having been involved in a plot to assassinate Hitler, she escaped from Germany (by a contrived marriage) to be interned in Britain a few months later on the declaration of war. She pulled every

string to get back to Germany. Finally she accepted the help of the SOE to get back into Europe. Her French was laughable.. Her German was of course faultless but her Jewish origin obvious, and she was immediately arrested. There is some evidence she was used as a 'decoy duck' and that was the fate of a great many who co-operated with Buckmaster.

It can be seen why Resistance organisations were suspicious of the SOE. It may be noted that among the real Resistance was an anarchist spy network. It was set up to counter Francoist pre-war intrigues, then to penetrate the fascist lines and to counteract the GPU in Spain, finally to work in the Resistance. If only it had been possible for Hilda Monte and others like her to contact the Ponzan group rather than Buckmaster's gang! They might have changed history. At the very least they would not have been betrayed.

AM



Trials and Tribulations in Trento

The town of Trento in Northern Italy can expect more fireworks on 13 October, at the start of the second trial of five comrades from Italy, Greece and Scotland, accused by the press of being part of "an international gang of anarchist robbers".

The five accused - Antonio Bundini, Christos Stradigopoulos, Carlo Tesseri, Eva Tzioutzia and Jean Weir - were arrested in the Chizzola mountains near Trento on 19 September 1994, in an operation by heavily armed carabinieri, following a raid on the Serravalle Bank in Rovereto.

An hysterical press and TV campaign sensationalised the arrests with lurid twaddle about "commandos", "international crime organisations" and "extremely dangerous gangs", and accused the five anarchists of being the authors of two earlier bank robberies in Ravina. Particular emphasis was placed on the presence among those arrested of the Scottish publisher Jean Weir (familiar to our long-time readers through her association with *Elephant Editions* and the magazine *Insurrection*), who was presented as the "wife of ex-Red Brigades leader (sic) Alfredo Bonanno", to raise the spectre of "terrorism" and back up media claims of "robbery in a political framework".

The arrested comrades explained their motives more simply, in an open letter which declared:

"We are anarchist individuals moved by a common sentiment of freedom. Our personal need for money would never have found satisfaction in exploitation, either on our backs or those of others. We therefore decided to turn our attention to a bank...The action we carried out should therefore be

considered an act of reappropriation for personal needs. We tried, and it didn't work."

With a speed uncharacteristic of Italian justice, though more understandable given the circumstances of their arrest, the court sentenced Antonio, Christos and Jean to five years in prison. Carlo, who had served a previous sentence for political action, received six years. Eva Tzioutzia, against whom there was insufficient evidence to proceed, was released and left the country.

Those sentenced appeared in court

"We are anarchist individuals moved by a common sense of freedom."

again on 19 April 1995, for a preliminary hearing of the charges that they were involved in two earlier bank robberies in Ravina, near Trento. These new accusations refer to two bank raids that were carried out simultaneously at the Rural Bank of Aldeno and Bank of Calderari on 20 July 1994. The comrades have declared their innocence of these charges, and have called for international solidarity to resist the judicial frame-up as part of a general mobilisation against the criminalisation of anarchist activity taking place in the region.

Antonio, Christos, Carlo and Jean were taken back to Trento at the end of May to appeal against sentence in the Rovereto case. On 30 May, two days before the appeal hearing opened, a large number of anarchists converged on the town to demonstrate their solidarity outside Trento prison. A barrage of fireworks, rockets and flares erupted

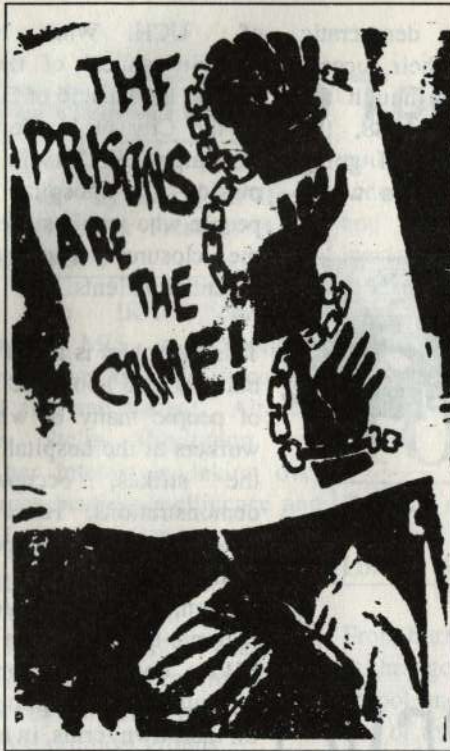
against and over the prison walls, and the intervention of police and carabinieri resulted in 28 arrests. The "happy brigade" were charged under a legal clause referring to "dispositions concerning arms control", "riotous assembly" and "refusal to be identified", and were given an official caution not to commit similar crimes in the area. Four comrades were issued with expulsion orders from the region.

The hearing took place on 1 June, and the court reduced the sentences of Antonio, Christos and Jean to three years four months, and Carlo's to four years four months. Having given something with one hand, however, the court took it back with the other, and sentenced Eva, who had been acquitted in the first trial and was happily absent, to three years four months. The police, upset by the considerable presence of anarchists who had come from all over Italy, made two arrests for "contempt" and "damaging a public building", resulting in further arrests during angry demonstrations outside the police station.

By a strange twist of fate, while the appeal was taking place, a judge presiding in another trial keeled over with a heart attack and died two days later. The deceased judge, by the name of Crea, was to have presided over the 13 October trial of Antonio, Christos, Carlo and Jean. Anarchists are loath to believe in superstition, but we may be forgiven for laughing if the new judge in the October trial falls victim to the curse that struck his predecessor.

Solidarity greetings, meanwhile, can be sent to: Jean Helen Weir, Via Comporgano 40, 20090 Opera (Milan), Italy; and to Antonio Bundini, Christos Stradigopoulos and Carlo Tesseri, Via Pilati 6, 38100 Trento, Italy.

BACK WITH THE WIND



America is again in the run-up to a replay of the Civil War. While one section of the nation, like Scarlett, enjoys the end of scarcity and can't be bothered with what makes their society tick, another is alarmed to the point of hysteria at what they fear is going to happen. They are attacking the least concession to the under-classes while at the same time call for the most repressive methods to deal with crime. The more wealth that the middle class accumulates the greedier it becomes. A huge under-class of the poor has been created, with an underbelly of crime that is also exploited by the middle class. A huge underclass has been created in the prison population which may rise numerically to the gulags of Russia and privatised prisons have the same economic purpose. That the chain gangs are back in Georgia is only the tip of the iceberg. Philadelphia (the city of 'brotherly love') has shown its fangs with the case of the Mumia Abu-Jamal whose case is dealt with elsewhere in this issue.

Mumia's involvement with Black activism and assertion, and his support for MOVE in particular, is the reason for his incarceration which has caused him sixteen years on Death Row, which is in excess of anything in the Gulag, whose principles are now absorbed as Americanism. MOVE incorporated Anarchist with other principles and scared the hell out of the State. The thought of this vast underclass becoming revolutionary triggered off that particular repression but in turn it has caused a such a wave of resentment that many think if Mumia

dies, it will be like the guns firing on Fort Sumter, the signal for civil war.

The State is getting ready for it. In New Jersey's State Prison in Trenton, a new management control unit (of the type in which Britain's Home Secretary Michael Howard is interested) is used to isolate prisoners who have been identified as politically subversive and incorrigible by prison warders (and grasses seeking special favours). In one of these Ojore N. Lutalo (formerly known as Leroy Bunting) has been placed. He describes himself as a New Afrikan (Black) Anarchist. Like political prisoners in Nazi Germany, his classification places him in special internment to prevent them from contact with other prisoners. This anti-riot control has not been based on anything that has happened, it is procedure for Anarchists, Black Muslims and other (mostly Black) radicals, to prevent them from 'contaminating' other prisoners. Such concessions as parole

eligibility do not apply to them, so it amounts to political internment not prison in the normal sense. This is war preparation not the penal system.

We salute Ojore Lutalo who is standing by his principles and fighting back at the concentration camps of America.

Write to Ojore N. Lutalo,
#59860, CN861,MCU, Trenton,
NJ 08625 USA



JUSTICE FOR KEITH MANN

Keith Mann was jailed for 14 years in December 1994. This outrageous sentence was for possession of explosive substances (White spirit and sugar!), attempted incitement, criminal damage to three meat vehicles and escape from custody.

Rapists and murderers get less. Keith is an ALF member who has been given an exemplary sentence to deter others. His real crime was to target property in his actions, which were motivated by compassion for animals. He did not harm any living thing, least of all any people.

It is scandalous that such an outrageous sentence should be passed and it is to support Keith and bring this case to wider public attention that the Justice for Keith Mann Campaign has been set up. Write to them at:
JFKM, c/o ICA, PO Box 1135, Downs View Rd, Hassocks, W.Sussex BN6 8AA

Anarcho-syndicalism in Puerto Real

From Shipyard resistance to direct democracy and community control

Published by Solidarity Federation,
PO Box 73, NORWICH NR3.
Available for #1

This short pamphlet consists of a talk given at an anarcho-syndicalist dayschool in London in 1993, by Pepe Gomez, a militant of the CNT in Puerto Real / Cadiz. There are other elements to this pamphlet but its real value lies in setting out, from the mouth of an anarcho-syndicalist, what anarcho-syndicalism is all about.

Workers in the shipyards went on strike against closures. But the struggle was much wider than this.

Every Thursday, the CNT called village assemblies involving the whole population, where decisions were made, delegates elected, and the conduct of the struggle discussed.



In the end, the Puerto Real shipyard was given some work, including some from contracts at European Union level. The workers won an exemplary settlement in terms of pension rights and conditions. The shipyards are still functioning, and the CNT Puerto Real has made links with other militant shipyard unions all over Spain.

This direct democracy was very real, and the CNT were conscious to try and break the dependency

culture that social democratic politics encourages. Their success is self evident - even though the struggle was won in 1988, the village assemblies are still going strong, and working on a whole range of issues.



INDIFFERENC

OMPLICITAT

This is anarcho-syndicalism in action - workers organising in their own interests, both at work and where they live. The combination of workplace militancy and a supportive, almost insurrectionary local population, is unbeatable.

An Unusual Occupation

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY;
An incomplete story of the
University College Hospital Strikes
and Occupations of 1992/3/4. £1.
News from Everywhere, Box 14,
138 Kingsland High Street
London E8 2NS

1992 to 1994 saw strikes, occupations and demonstrations around the closure and sale of parts

of UCH. While lacking the celebrity appeal of the campaign against the closure of Barts hospital in the City of London, the UCH campaigns did draw in people from outside the hospital itself, the people who would suffer most from the closures. The patients and potential patients.

This pamphlet is about the disputes but it is also about the involvement of people many of who were not workers at the hospital. It describes the strikes, occupations and demonstrations. However it also devotes a lot of space to the manipulation of the dispute by Unison, the strikers union, both at a national level and then by the local SWP dominated branch. The difficulties of trying to be involved, on their own terms, in a dispute that was quickly controlled by a well organised political group.

It raises the question once more of how divisions between people directly involved in the dispute and those affected by it are maintained of how this is used to keep us under control. As the health service is run down more and more resistance must come from us all. We have as big a stake in it as the health workers. Sooner or later you're going to end up in hospital. This pamphlet is about going beyond token solidarity. It has as useful, if more depressing, lessons as the story of Puerto Real.

As we go to press one of the Unison stewards at UCH, active throughout the disputes, is under suspension. The UCH authorities don't share *Occupational Therapy's* analysis of the role of the union.



A Speculation Too Far ?

"Turning Up The Heat - MI5 After the Cold War" by Larry O'Hara.
Published by Phoenix Press 1994 £5.
ISBN 0 948984 29 5

Following the IRA "ceasefire" announcement, MI5 is desperately seeking new arenas to justify its current operational size and budget. Already, MI5 boss Stella Rimington has intimated her interest in taking over national drugs-busting intelligence and operations from the police.

It is the intentions of MI5 that O'Hara sets out to analyse in his book, "Turning Up the Heat". His main contention is that MI5 is carving itself a future role by directly manipulating British radical political groups.

After a long introduction he gets off to a promising enough start by looking at MI5's role in operations against the Welsh Nationalists Meibion Glyndwr. A brief diversion via Scottish nationalism then brings him to the bizarre story surrounding the involvement of prominent Red Action member Patrick Hayes in an IRA Active Service Unit. Here O'Hara promises much: "There is the possibility that MI5 might have agent(s) inside the IRA, pushing them to involve British leftists to coincide with a state-sponsored Brit agenda." Anything is of course, possible; his contention might even be true. But O'Hara fails to deliver.

Unfortunately, this is the pattern that is repeated throughout the rest of the book. The huge lists of references and copious footnotes give an authoritative impression, but beyond rehashing press reports we are treated to his own, at times wildly conspiratorial, ramblings.

Of course MI5 are interested in monitoring "domestic subversives" and, where they can, manipulating events to their own benefit. But this book adds

nothing to our understanding of this. Indeed, applying O'Hara's techniques and "worldview" to this book would inevitably lead to the conclusion that O'Hara himself is a "state asset" and this book a work of "disinformation".

TG

TOO BAD

BAD: the autobiography of James Carr
Pelagian Press, 1995. BM Signpost,
London WC1N 3XX. £5.95

From burning down his East LA school at the age of 9, through homes, reform school and armed robbery to becoming one of the most notorious rebels in the California prison system, this is a brilliant account of Carr's Life.

A close friend of George Jackson in Folsom, Carr gives a warts and all account of how their "Wolf Pack" gang ran various profitable rackets and fought its way to a position of strength in the bloody prison race war then raging. Later, Jackson was to play a central role in breaking down the racial divisions amongst prisoners that the guards used as a control mechanism. Carr was transferred to other prisons and realised that if he did not use his cunning to gain his release then he would die in prison. Jackson was eventually murdered by guards in an escape attempt.

Carr did engineer his own release and on the outside became involved with the Black Panther Party but became disillusioned with their reformism, hierarchical cult of leadership and their suicidal guerilla ideology. Influenced by his readings of the situationists, Lukacs, Korsch and others, he developed a lucid critique of the Panthers and the rest of the left with its "romantic fetishisation of crime, its rhetoric of guerrilla warfare and its solicitation and exploitation of convict martyrs".

Just after he completed his autobiography, early one morning in 1972, James Carr was shot down in a "gangland style" murder. Intelligent speculation suggests either the State or a faction of the Panthers as the most likely suspects. On its first publication BAD was immediately suppressed by the California Department of Corrections.

This is a very readable classic with an excellent new afterword that attempts to put the book in a historical context and summarises the emergence, defeat and possible re-emergence of revolt in the US since the 60s. As the afterword says, "James Carr was a very shrewd man, that's why, against the odds, he survived for as long as he did. His story (like others of its kind) is inspiring and illuminating because he was among the "wretched of the earth" who rebelled, but with a growing subversive intelligence that will be sorely needed in our future battles to turn the old world upside down as we destroy all the ghettos and prisons."

Two other fairly recent books on related subjects are:

The Rise And Fall of California's Prison Movement by Eric Cummins. (Stanford University Press. 1994.) and **This Side of Glory: the autobiography of David Hilliard and the story of the BPP.** (Little, Brown and co. 1993).

The first covers the period of 1950 to 1980 and highlights the self education and politicisation as well as revolts on both sides of the prison walls. However, the author, an academic, comes to some very lame conclusions, calling for a "just" and "humane" prison system.

The second is an excellent account by a founder of the BPP charting its growth and decline and including his own descent into alcoholism and crack addiction. It is not a critique but honest enough to form one.

Don't moan, **ORGANISE!**

"Organise! The Voice of Anarcho-Syndicalism", now in magazine format, for more in depth coverage and analysis of a wide range of issues. Issue No. 1 includes: a full analysis of the current 'impasse' in the peace process; an examination of the protestant working class; a look at moves towards water privatisation in the north and lessons we can learn from current struggles against this south of the border; a look at the necessity of building an Anarcho-Syndicalist alternative; and much more...

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ORGANISE! The Voice of Anarcho-Syndicalism

P.O. Box 505, Belfast BT11 9EE



A review of

Albert Meltzer's long-awaited autobiography, *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels*, will appear in our next issue.

Anarcho Quiz

1. The Mafia, like all business and feudal interests of Italy, fuelled Mussolini's rise to power. Why then, specifically, did Mussolini later turn on and suppress the Mafia?

2. The independent Irish Government felt obliged from the first to revive the Irish language and encourage the Gaelic classics. But the greatest are obscene by Roman Catholic standards, and defy censorship. How is the dilemma solved?

3. The best known quotation from Kipling is "Lest We Forget" (taken from *The Recessional*). It is on all First World War memorials. But what was it he told us not to forget? Does anyone remember?

4. Which American stage star, taking advantage of US neutrality at the time, went on a secret mission from the French Maquis to the Spanish Resistance in 1941?

5. What would be the effect on the British economy if everyone who ever offended against conventional sexual standards was (like MPs) forced to resign their job? (Asked theoretically in the press).

(Answers on page 18)